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9 December 1963

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

Bolivia: The taking of four American hostages by Bolivian miners will probably bring the precarious political situation to a climax.

President Paz' plans to effect the release of the Americans include the use of troops if negotiations with the miners fail. The US Embassy reports that Paz has no intention of meeting the miners' demand that he release three imprisoned Communist labor leaders. If troops are used, the ambassador sees a strong possibility of open civil war between the well-armed miners and the government forces.

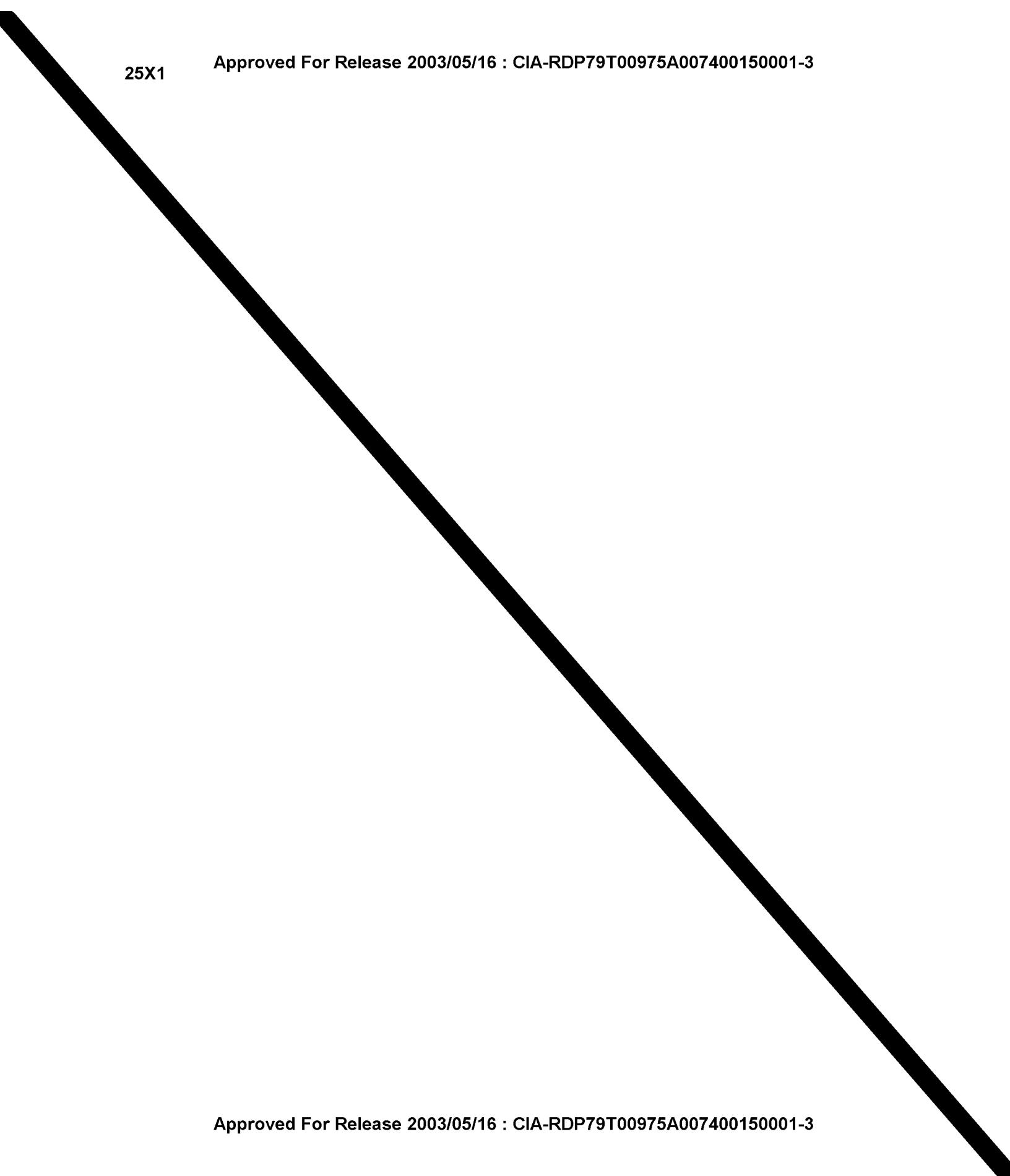
This development brings Paz into direct conflict with Vice President Lechin, since Lechin's power is largely centered on the miners.

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Paz is likely to use this opportunity to intensify his campaign against Lechin and extremists of both the political right and left. The pro-government press has attacked Lechin's connections with the Communists, and on 6 December the Bolivian Congress formally censured Lechin for his public attacks against Paz.

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Syria: The power struggle within the Syrian regime appears to be resolving in favor of the moderate faction led by Premier Hafiz.

Efforts by Hafiz, a military member of the Baath Party, to associate the regime with non-Baath political elements have gained momentum, and Baathist extremists led by Vice Premier Umran who oppose this move are being eclipsed. General Umran still occupies his governmental post, however, and desperate counter-action by him and his supporters in the army and the Baath-dominated national guard cannot be completely discounted.

There is also a possibility that pro-Nasir groups will try to exploit the division within the regime by attempting to seize power.

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Italy: South Tirolean irredentists are reportedly considering a plan to extend their terrorist campaign to major North Italian cities.

Italian security officials have repeatedly expressed serious concern over the possibility of renewed outbreaks of violence by extremist groups which favor increased autonomy for the largely German-speaking South Tirol. Both the Milan police chief and the Foreign Ministry official in charge of South Tirol affairs believe that the trial of about 100 alleged terrorists, which is scheduled to open today in Milan, could spark terrorist acts in Milan, Genoa, and Turin.

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Italo-Austrian relations, which have recently improved somewhat, probably will take a sharp turn for the worse if the terrorist plans are implemented.

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Yugoslavia: [Tito is apparently no longer deeply involved in the administration of Yugoslav affairs.]

[In a talk with the US chargé on 5 December, Tito gave an "impression of remarkable vagueness" on such matters as negotiations with the US for a Fulbright agreement and a claims settlement and on Yugoslav plans to name streets and institutions after President Kennedy. When voicing standard Yugoslav views on peaceful coexistence and international cooperation, he seemed sensitive only to superficial implications.]

[The chargé noted that Tito's rigid, doctrinaire attitudes have mellowed to the point that he now can consider the US in the category of peace-loving nations, although he implied uncertainty about President Johnson's policies.]

[Tito's vagueness is probably a reflection in part of his having relinquished a number of his responsibilities last June in connection with Yugoslavia's adoption of a new constitution.]

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NOTES

France - Eastern Europe: France has decided to raise the level of its legations in Rumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria to embassies. This move follows London's announcement of 2 December that Britain and the same three Communist states had agreed to upgrade their missions to embassies. The French legations have been instructed to defer notification of the host governments until 10 December to avoid giving the impression that Paris is scrambling to court the Eastern European satellites.

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Thailand: Bangkok remains quiet following the death of Premier Sarit on 8 December. It now appears that Deputy Premier Thanom Kittikachorn will succeed Sarit and that, for the short term at least, there will be an orderly transfer of power. To guard against any attempt to upset the transfer of power to Thanom, General Chitti Navisathien, acting commander in chief of the army, has forbidden all troop movements in the Bangkok area.

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